

1. Study Purpose and Background

As the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization or MPO for the Maricopa region, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is developing a new Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). As part of the RTP development process, and at the request of local jurisdictions, MAG initiated three sub-area transportation studies¹ to provide background information and input to the RTP. This area study focuses on the Northwest portion of the region.

Related to this study, MAG also initiated a separate study for regional high capacity transit (HCT). Valley Metro similarly initiated a Regional Transit System (RTS) Study. Findings from these two transit studies conducted in parallel formed the basis for recommendations for transit in this study. More information on the transit and other background studies for the RTP may be found on the MAG Web page, located at www.mag.maricopa.gov.

The goal of the MAG Northwest Area Transportation Study (NWATS) is to identify transportation needs within the study area and develop a prioritized list of major transportation projects to address those needs. The highest ranked projects from that list will subsequently be assessed against competing regional projects as part of the RTP process, where the highest ranked projects will be selected for possible regional funding. In addition to identifying major projects for potential regional funding, this area study will provide a general long range

framework to prioritize and guide transportation development in the northwest.

1.1 Study Area

As shown in Figure 1, the study area is bounded by I-17 on the east, I-10 on the south, and the county lines on the west and north. While the study covered the entire area, the focus for recommendations is the developed or developing area, which generally lies east of the CANAMEX Corridor.

The study area includes El Mirage, Glendale, Litchfield Park, Peoria, Surprise, Wickenburg, and Youngtown. Additionally, portions of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Phoenix and Tolleson as well as unincorporated portions of Maricopa County are located within the study area.

1.2 Study Process / Methodology

The study was structured into separate tasks and produced the following working papers:

Working Paper #1: Review of Previous Studies

Working Paper #2: Socioeconomic Conditions

Working Paper #3: Transportation Data

Working Paper #4: Transportation Issues

Working Paper #5: Evaluation of Alternatives

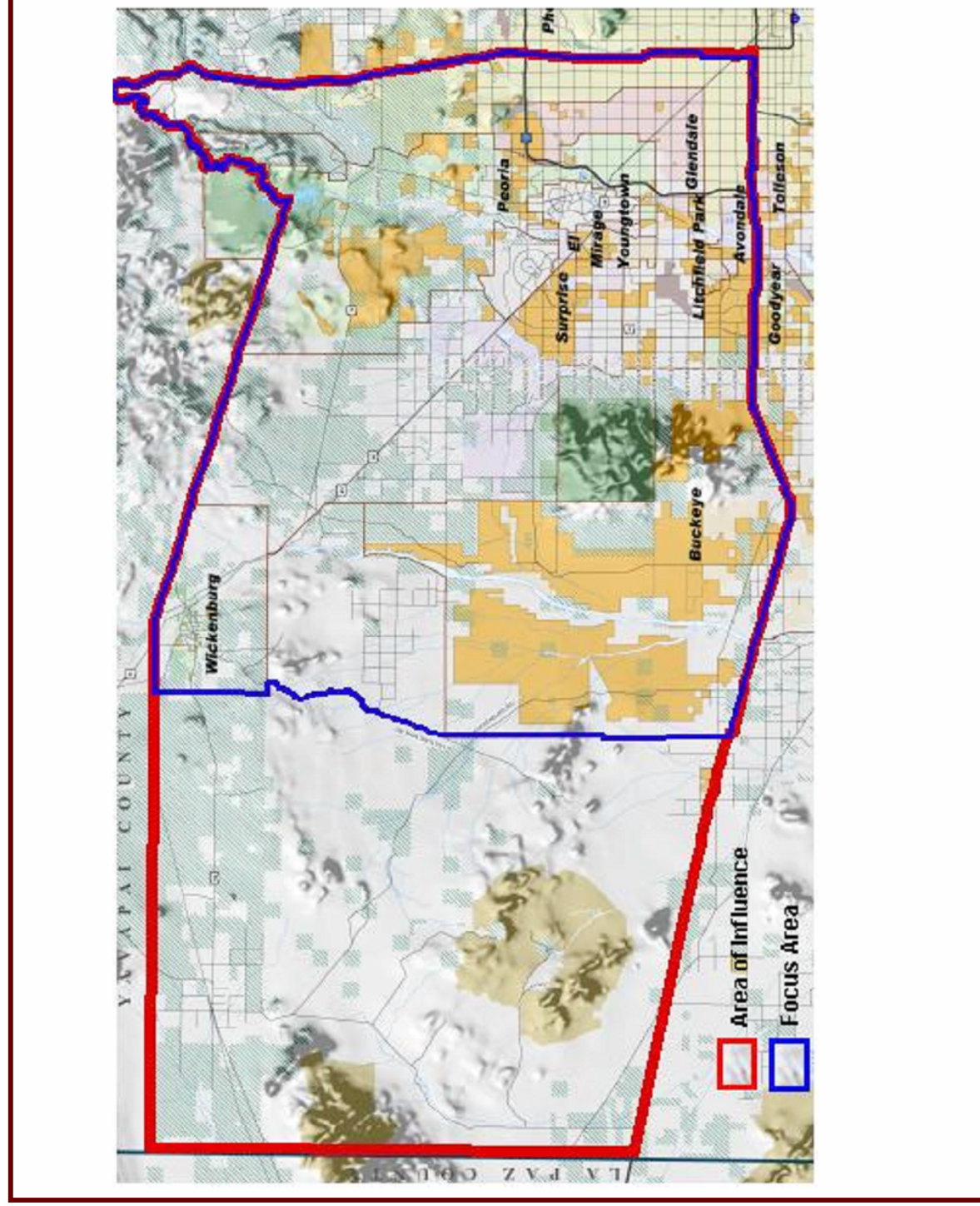
Working Paper #6: Recommendations

The Final Report is based upon the Working Papers and feedback on the papers received in consultation with the public, stakeholders and agencies, which occurred throughout the study process. The first three papers document key results from previous related studies as well as available information on growth and transportation in the northwest.

¹ Area studies for the southwest and southeast were also conducted. Separate area studies for central Phoenix and the northeast were declined by the local jurisdictions, which had already completed studies or otherwise wished to provide input to the RTP process directly.

Working Paper #4 documents transportation issues identified through the consultation process as well as technical analyses conducted for this study. Working Paper #5 presents alternative scenarios designed to address the identified transportation issues and assesses the scenarios against standard evaluation criteria. Finally, considering the assessment of alternatives and feedback received in consultation, recommendations for transportation improvements in the Northwest area are developed.

Figure 1: Study Area



Northwest Area Transportation Study

STUDY AREA